

A Different Kind of Monster by CherishIsTheWord

Series: [Mike & Eleven Slice of Life \[2\]](#)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: F/M, Fluff

Language: English

Characters: Eleven (Stranger Things), Mike Wheeler

Relationships: Eleven & Mike Wheeler, Eleven/Mike Wheeler

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-06-17

Updated: 2017-06-17

Packaged: 2022-04-02 00:14:06

Rating: General Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,500

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Eleven learns about Halloween, but she feels uneasy when the topic of monsters comes up.

A Different Kind of Monster

October 31, 1984

A young girl was sitting alone in the basement of the Wheeler household, hair slightly grown out. Her eyes focused intensely on the clock, which read 3:00.

“Three... one... five,” she assured herself.

It was El. She had recently come back and was still getting used to what the so-called normal life was about. And today she was nervous, because today, as Mike had told her, was something called “Halloween”...

That morning, Mike was gathering his books when he said something that piqued El’s curiosity. “Gotta go, El. Happy Halloween!”

“Hello...ween?”

“Halloween. That's why we're having the party tonight. It's a day where people dress up as whatever they want. Superheroes, ghosts, witches, all sorts of monsters. I'm sorry I forgot to tell you more about it.”

With that, El’s eyes widened. She didn’t understand how anyone would want to be a monster. “Monsters?,” she asked, part-question, part-disbelief.

Mike tried to reassure her before heading out to school. “Not real ones, just pretend. Plus there’s candy and scary movies.”

She wasn’t so sure about scary movies either, though she did like the idea of candy.

“It’s fun, I promise,” Mike continued, seeing the apprehension in the girl before him.

El trusted Mike. He was one of the first people who ever treated her like she was a person. He taught her about friends and promises. If he promised it was fun, I guess it had to be. Still, after all they'd been through, El just couldn't understand what could be fun about monsters.

"I'll be back from school a little after 3, okay? Remember the clock? Three, one, five."

"Three, one, five," she repeated his words, returning a small smile to Mike as he went off.

The clock continued to slowly tick, and El wasn't sure whether she'd prefer it to speed up or stay in place forever. But she couldn't sit around one minute more. She knew the boys were going to have a party tonight, and Karen had brought a box of things for it. Maybe the best thing she could do, El thought, is confront what was in store for her.

Nestled on top of the box was a paper decoration. It looked like a ghost, but a happy ghost with a big, friendly smile adorning its face. This surprised El. The concept of a ghost to her was limited, but she knew they were supposed to be people who had died and their spirit stuck around. Why was this ghost happy, she thought? Still, that it looked nice was encouraging to El. So far, so good.

Next up was a bag. It was soft like a pillow and looked like cotton. She was alarmed to see spiders in it, before realizing they were fake.

It was what she found next that really changed the course of her day. It was a vinyl record, like the ones she had heard played before in Mike's basement. There was a big green creature on the cover and several other strange characters playing instruments. What on earth could this mean, El thought? El knew how to read but didn't understand the meaning of many words she encountered. One word she could make no mistake about, however, was "Monster". And there it was, right at the top of the cover. With a word like that

coupled with the weird cover art, El got the courage to take out the vinyl record and put it on the player, just as she had watched the Wheelers do since she had gotten back.

As the record started moving, El carefully dropped the needle in place and waited in anticipation.

The sounds of creaking, bubbles, and chains started to play out, vaguely recalling some of the sounds and feelings from her days in the lab. El wasn't sure if this was a good idea after all. Suddenly a drum kicked in, and it was a song...

“I was working in the lab late one night
When my eyes beheld an eerie sight
For my monster from his slab began to rise
And suddenly to my surprise
He did the mash
He did the monster mash
The monster mash
It was a graveyard smash
He did the mash
It caught on in a flash
He did the mash
He did the monster mash”

El cocked her head to the side, unsure what to make of these new sounds. She had heard music before, the songs that the radio played. This, however, was different. The man was talking about monsters! But it was bouncy, and there were others singing along with him. It sounded almost...fun!?

“From my laboratory in the castle east
To the master bedroom where the vampires feast
The ghouls all came from their humble abodes
To get a jolt from my electrodes”

By the time the second chorus rolled around, El's eyes widened this time not out of fear but wonderment.

“The zombies were having fun

The party had just begun
The guests included Wolf Man
Dracula and his son”

It was a party, El realized. Like the one Mike and the boys were going to have with her tonight. The song continued to play as El began to relax. These monsters weren’t scary. What had she been worried about? Mike had told her it would be fun, and now El couldn’t wait. Maybe even she could dress up? Mike said people could pick whatever they wanted, and that thought excited her.

As the song drew to a close, El stopped the record and started it all over once again. This song...the “Monster Mash” would become her new favourite. There were many songs she liked and many that made her happy, but this one opened her mind to something new, of a whole new world where things that are supposed to be scary and bad can be reclaimed as something else. Maybe this Halloween idea wasn’t so bad after all!

El was so entranced with the music that she didn’t notice Mike arrive home and head down to the basement to see what she was up to. He was surprised to see El so fascinated with the song. When he left that morning, he knew she had many unanswered questions about what Halloween was and had hoped she was doing okay with some of the things he had said. To see her face filled with intrigue and even traces of delight, well, he thought that was just the cutest thing.

As the song drew to a close again, Mike took the opportunity to approach. El turned to greet him.

“Hi El,” the boy said.

“Hi, Mike.”

“You found the Monster Mash. You like it?”

El nodded.

“Cool, well maybe we can play it tonight too. We could even dance to it. You know, if you want.”

El smiled. "Okay, Mike." El furrowed her brow as if she wanted to ask another question.

"What is it, El?"

"What... will you be?"

"Huh?"

"For... Halloween," El spoke carefully.

"Oh, you see, before you came back, the guys and I got these Ghostbusters costumes made. So I guess I'll be that. Did you want to be something? I know there's not much time, but—"

"A f-fairy?"

"Fairy? Hey, yeah, we have the wings and everything. Good idea, El. That's what you want to be?"

El nodded.

"Cool. Maybe we could find one of Nancy's old dresses and we can attach them to that."

El thought that was a wonderful idea. She was getting around to the idea that maybe monsters, the ones that weren't real like the Demogorgon, could be fun. But for this year, she wanted to be something pretty. Another thought dawned on El, causing her to frown.

The concerned boy was always quick to pick on her expressive face. "Is something wrong, El?"

"Scary movies?" El questioned.

"Oh, well, we don't have to. It's sometimes part of the tradition, but maybe we could find something else to do instead."

“Tradition?”

“It’s something we do every year, but-”

“Okay,” El said simply.

“Really?”

El nodded. “Will you hold my hand?” she asked earnestly.

All it took was those few simple words for El to charm the boy into obliging. He didn’t care what his friends would think, even if he would never hear the end of it. “Promise.”

El ended up having a lot of fun on her first Halloween, just like Mike had said she would. They dressed up, had candy, and danced to the Monster Mash. They even watched a scary movie, and El found even that could be fun to watch with people who care about you.

Mike ended up having to hold El’s hand throughout, as if he needed any excuse to want to. Whereas El got to experience the fears and exhilaration of a spooky movie for the first time, Mike was so fixated on the girl beside him that he couldn’t tell you what the movie was even about.

Author's Note:

All comments welcome!